

P 271244Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3837
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 000716

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SCUL](#) [SW](#) [IO](#)

SUBJECT: OPPORTUNITY FAIR ATTRACTS HUNDREDS OF PARTICIPANTS

¶1. (U) Summary: On October 16, Sdertdlje, the Swedish town of 75,000 persons, about one third of whom are Iraqi born, collaborated with Embassy Stockholm to host the Sdertdlje Opportunity Fair "USA 2009." The fair was designed to provide information and advice on the myriad opportunities for people who would like to spend a short time abroad in the United States, whether as students, au pairs, or interns. Ambassador Wood and Sdertdlje Mayor Anders Lago opened the event, expressing pleasure over the continued cooperation between the city and the embassy. Over 700 people attended the fair where they could talk one on one with representatives from various placement organizations and participate in two panel discussions. The panelists for the first discussion were all returnees who shared their experiences living in the United States. The panelists for the second discussion discussed how to apply to universities and for visas. Both panels engaged in lively discussions. The event was covered favorably in both printed and broadcast media. End summary.

¶2. (U) The Opportunity Fair in Sdertdlje continues the cooperation between the U.S. Embassy and the city of Sdertdlje. In the Spring of 2008, Anders Lago, Mayor of Sdertdlje spoke with the Ambassador about what could be done to help the Iraqi immigrants in Sdertdlje, suggesting that perhaps the Embassy could provide a number of green cards that the city could then distribute. Ambassador Wood explained that this would not be possible, but that there could be some form of cooperation to help the immigrants gain some kind of American experience. Working with the city, it was decided to hold a fair to which organizations working with short term exchanges to the United States would be invited.

¶3. (U) For many young Swedes, travelling abroad for a temporary stay is almost a rite of passage. Most travelers abroad opt to go to the United States to pursue short term employment (such as Au Pair), practical internships or studies at both the High School and College levels. Many long term residents of Sweden are intricately familiar with the types of opportunities available for such short term stays in the United States. However, the immigrant community is often not aware of these opportunities. Thus, a fair highlighting these organizations to the immigrant community was a welcome event.

¶4. (U) In total, over 15 organizations participated in the fair, including the Swedish American Chamber of Commerce USA, the Swedish American Chamber of Commerce New York, the Fulbright Commission, the Center for International Studies, Youth for Understanding, Kilroy Education, Rotary International and others. All of the participating organizations were pleased with the event, expressing willingness to engage in a similar event in the future.

¶5. (U) Most of the 700 participants were pleased with the event and the information that they received. One of the visitors, one of the visitors, David Hanna, said, "There are a lot of people that can help me out with the questions that I have...how I can reach people, how I can contact the universities. So it's pretty helpful, that's why I'm here." Although concerted efforts were made to inform Sdertdlje's population that the fair would be an information-only fair (i.e. there would be no internships, placements, jobs, or green cards handed out), some still arrived at the fair with that expectation and were disappointed.

¶6. (U) Another highlight of the fair was two panel discussions. The first panel was comprised of returnees from various programs, including one student, one au pair, and two interns. Two members of the panel were of immigrant ancestry and thus resonated with the group. One of the interns, Elham Nogoki, particularly poignantly related the process she went through to get the internship, explaining that neither she nor her family ever thought that she

would get the internship, based on her appearance and name. Due to her success, however, she inspired the attendees by letting them know that opportunities were out there for immigrants as well. The second panel covered the "how to"s of applying to colleges in the United States and for Visas, with an educational advisor from the Fulbright Program and post's Consul as speakers.

17. (U) The event was also largely covered favorably in the press, both in the printed and broadcast media, by local and national outlets, with just one outlet focusing on the fact that jobs were not available for the taking at the fair.

18. (U) Long-term results of the opportunity fair remain to be seen. Follow up is planned with the participating organizations to see the effects of the fair on both applications and placements.

WOOD